

# **MORNING ADDRESS**

## **W. WILSON GOODE, SR.**

Reverend Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr., has been a leader in military, government (federal, state, and local levels) and church, and through civic, social action, and neighborhood organizations for more than forty years.

He is currently the senior advisor on faith-based initiatives for Public/Private Ventures, where he also directs the Amachi Program, a national faith-based mentoring model for children of incarcerated parents.

Dr. Goode has helped create more livable communities by building housing and organizing intervention programs in education, employment, and economic development. He broke racial barriers in state and local government with his appointments as chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (1978), managing director of the City of Philadelphia (1980), and the first African American elected Mayor of Philadelphia (1983).

He has served on more than 40 corporate, civic, religious, and neighborhood boards of directors. He currently serves on a number of boards, including Eastern University. He is chair of four boards: The Free Library of Philadelphia; Cornerstone Christian Academy; Self, Inc.; and Philadelphia Leadership Foundation.

Dr. Goode has provided leadership on issues of civil rights, education, housing, mentoring and faith-based initiatives. He has been recognized for his contributions by more than 2,000 organizations with awards, certificates, and honors. He is a Fellow in the National Academy of Public Administration and The Society for the Study of Black Religion. Fourteen colleges and universities have recognized him with honorary doctorates.

A sought-after preacher, speaker, and panelist, he makes more than 150 appearances annually. He has authored his autobiography, *In Goode Faith* (1992). Dr. Goode received a B.A. in history and political science from Morgan State University (1961); a masters in governmental administration from the Wharton School's Fels Institute at the University of Pennsylvania; and a doctorate of ministry from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (2000).

He and his wife, Velma, have one son, two daughters, and two granddaughters.

# Amachi

W. Wilson Goode, Sr., D. Min., Director

## People of Faith Mentoring Children of Promise

An Initiative of Public/Private Ventures, Big Brother Big Sister Association, and the Center for Research on Religion in Urban Civil Society at the University of Pennsylvania

**America's most isolated and at-risk children** are the estimated 7.3 million children who have one or both parents under some form of state or federal supervision. Without effective intervention, 70 percent of these children will likely follow their parent's path into jail or prison. The Amachi mentoring program was developed to provide them with a different path - by establishing the consistent presence of loving, caring people of faith.

**Amachi mentors meet weekly** with a child who has been carefully matched with them; they often live and worship in the same neighborhoods as the children. Amachi's hope is that one-to-one mentoring by caring adults will significantly improve the life opportunities of the children. Studies have clearly demonstrated that the Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS) mentoring model has positive effects - and now through Amachi, the strengths of mentoring and congregational volunteers are brought together.

**Amachi began in Philadelphia in September 2000** with funding from Pew Charitable Trusts as a partnership between Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southeastern Pennsylvania. P/PV was responsible for administrative oversight and financial management of the program and for recruiting congregations and children. The organization also collected and analyzed the data used to monitor the matches and gauge the overall progress of Amachi. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southeastern Pennsylvania screened the volunteers and children, and made the match.

**In 2002 P/PV began an Amachi program in New York**, and during the fall of 2003, P/PV began expanding the Amachi model nationwide with the help of funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the William Simon Foundation. The first Amachi Training Institute was conducted in December 2003. As of June 7, 2006, the Institute has trained 1467 people representing 539 organizations from 313 cities in 47 states.

**Amachi is pleased to partner with Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree Program**, where in selected locations across the country Amachi and Prison Fellowship collaborate to provide mentors for the Angel Tree children. In return, Prison Fellowship offers the mentors from local congregations a workshop on how the Angel Tree program works. There are more than 600,000 children of prisoners in Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program.

**The Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS)** continues to provide support to the Amachi Programs. CNCS began supporting Amachi in 2002, assigning 40 part-time AmeriCorps members who served as Congregational Volunteer Coordinators for the Philadelphia Amachi Program. In November 2003 the Corporation's support increased and Amachi was granted 55 full-time member slots to support the national expansion of Amachi. Support continues to grow and in June 2006, the Corporation again acknowledged the program's success and added 60 part-time AmeriCorps slots to the existing 55 full-time VISTA slots.

"Who knows what God has brought us through this child..."

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# Goode people put faith in kids

## Ex-mayor's initiative places at-risk youths with mentors

The sons and daughters of the incarcerated are the most vulnerable of all at-risk children in our cities. Seventy percent of the children of prisoners will go to jail at some point in their lives. They're six times more likely to drop out, cause trouble in school, sell drugs or commit criminal acts than children who never had a parent incarcerated.

An innovative program called AMACHI, which just completed its second year in Philadelphia, matches these children with mentors from local churches.

AMACHI's developer and director is the Rev. Dr. W. Wilson Goode. The *Daily News* interviewed the former mayor, now an ordained Baptist minister, at his office in Public/Private Ventures in Center City.

**Q: What does AMACHI mean?**

**A:** It is a West African word — "Who knows but what God has brought us through this child."

**Q: How does it work?**

**A:** AMACHI is a one-on-one mentoring program that is based on congregations providing volunteers. It uses the Big Brothers/Big Sisters model of mentoring.

**Q: Where are your mentors?**

**A:** They are members of 50 churches in Philadelphia, with clusters in North Central, Southwest, West Kensington and South Philadelphia. We also have 12 churches in the city of Chester and now have AMACHI in Brooklyn, N.Y., with seven churches.

**Q: What do you ask of the mentors?**

**A:** We ask for a commitment of one hour once a week for one year. Most of our mentors meet with the children much more than that. They average about nine hours a month together and more time on the phone.

**Q: What does it take?**

**A:** We want someone with a love for children, who will give their time freely and will establish a relationship with this child. We don't expect the mentor to tell the child what to do. We want a non-judgmental relationship.

**Q: How much preparation?**

**A:** Our mentors take a half-day training, run by Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and there is some in-service training. We provide a match within 90 days of applying.



**GOODE:** "We want a non-judgmental relationship."

**Q: How do these mentoring relationships work?**

**A:** These faith mentors do something different from other mentors. There's more church-based activities, sharing meals, just hanging out. There's less playing sports or going to games or museums than you might hear in other programs.

**Q: What is the church's role?**

**A:** We coordinate AMACHI through the pastors. We ask them to help us find children of incarcerated parents in their communities and to find mentors in their churches.

**Q: How do you learn which children need help?**

**A:** I regularly go to the prisons and I ask the inmates to provide names. The prisoners, especially the women, tell us about their children. We get some referrals from pastors, the prison system or the children's care-givers.

**Q: Why churches?**

**A:** The congregations are an untapped resource of volunteers. It is our belief that they are prepared to partner with secular

groups to rescue children in their community.

**Q: How is it funded?**

**A:** Two thirds comes from the Pew Charitable Trusts. The other third is public support from Americorps and the City of Philadelphia.

**Q: Who manages AMACHI?**

**A:** It's run from my office here at Public/Private Ventures, with case management and training by Big Brothers/Big Sisters and help from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Q: What is AMACHI's status?**

**A:** More than 400 active matches. Another 75 matches completed their one-year commitment and are no longer active.

**Q: Do any mentors and children stay in touch more than a year?**

**A:** Yes, about 200 of our matches are in their second year and a few who started in March 2001 are beginning their third year.

**Q: Who are the children?**

**A:** It's almost evenly split between boys, 46 percent, and girls, 54 percent. Eighty percent are youngsters from 6 to 12 years old. Almost all are from homes where the father is absent, and most have mothers in prison as well.

**Q: What's next for AMACHI?**

**A:** We expect to expand into 15 more cities in the next 12 months.

—Ron Goldwyn

**For more information on the program, call 215-557-4437.**

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